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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000131

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [AM](#) [KPRP](#)

SUBJECT: CESIUM 137 CONFISCATED ON THE TURKISH BORDER

REF: 04 YEREVAN 2450

Classified By: DCM A.F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) At a January 23 meeting, Ashot Martirosyan, head of the Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Agency (ANRA) told us that on 16 December, a source of Cesium 137 was seized by Turkish Authorities at the Turkish-Georgian border. Martirosyan stated that he received a fax from the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEA) which claimed that the Cesium-137 was seized from a collection of scrap metal at the Turkish Sarp Customs Border Gate. The truck that transported the scrap metal had reportedly originated in Armenia, passed through Georgia and then arrived at the Turkish border. The TAEA stated in the fax that the weight of the device was about 40 kg and the dose rate measured at the surface of the device was 60 Sv/h. The truck that carried the Cesium 137 had ID number 08 K 5141/5140.

2. (C) The scrap metal allegedly came from the Yerevan-based chemical factory Polivinilatsetat. Martirosyan told us that he sent investigators to that plant and found no evidence of any Cesium 137. Martirosyan stated that a colleague from Georgia had examined the seized Cesium 137 and due to the age and bad condition of the container, was unable to recognize any registration marks. Martirosyan could not discount the possibility that the Cesium 137 was placed in the scrap metal in Georgia or in Turkey before it reached the customs border gate. Martirosyan would not speculate as to why the Georgian and Armenian border services were not able to detect the Cesium 137 if the Cesium 137 did in fact originate in Armenia.

3. (C) Martirosyan told us that ANRA's cooperation with the TAEA is complicated due to the lack of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. Martirosyan told us that the Armenian National Security Service (NSS) had the lead in this investigation.

4. (C) Per reftel Martirosyan had no new information concerning the Cesium 137 which was seized from Armenian citizen Gagik Tovmasian in October 2004 in Armenia. Martirosyan stated that the NSS was still investigating that case and had not shared any new information with ANRA.
EVANS